

CLAIMS

1. A retroreflective material of the kind referred to in which the coating used to produce or enhance retroreflectivity and which bridges at least some of the gaps between the beads is treated and/or removed to produce areas of contrast.
2. A material as claimed in Claim 1 in which the coating is removed selectively so that the areas of contrast represent patterning and/or graphical and/or pictorial matter.
3. A material as claimed in Claim 1 in which the coating bridging substantially all of the gaps between the beads is removed or treated.
4. A material as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 3 in the form of a tape.
5. A material as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 3 in the form of a sheet.
6. A material as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which coating has been removed in such a way as to expose the underlying substrate.
7. A material as claimed in any one one of the preceding claims in which the the substrate is coloured.
8. A material as claimed in any of Claims 1 to 5 in which the contrast is produced by chemical treatment of the coating.
9. A material as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 5 or 8 in which said treatment involves colouring of the coating.

10. A material as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the coating is metal based.

11. A material as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the coating
5 has been effected by metallisation.

12. A material as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 10 in which the coating comprises a medium containing elements imparting retroreflectivity.

10 13. A material as claimed in Claim 12 in which the elements comprise metal flake or mica.

14. A method of modifying the appearance of a retroreflective material of the kind referred to, for example involving applying patterning and/or graphical and/or
15 pictorial matter to the material, in which the coating used to produce or enhance retroreflectivity and which bridges at least some of the gaps between the beads is treated and/or removed to produce areas of contrast.

15. A method as claimed in Claim 14 in which the areas of contrast correspond
20 to the desired patterning and/or graphical and/or pictorial matter.

16. A method as claimed in Claim 14 or 15 in which removal or treatment of the coating is effected using a medium capable of being applied by a contact or non-contact printing technique and capable of dissolving or otherwise rendering the metal removable
25 or changing the visual appearance.

17. A method as claimed in Claim 14 or 15 in which the coating is treated to render the treated areas visibly distinct from the coating adhered directly to the beads.

18. A method as claimed in Claim 17 in which coating is removed in parts and in which said treatment is such as to result in the the treated areas being visibly distinguishable from those areas from which coating has been removed.